

The Mystery of South Mountain.

Written for The Sunday Chat

By F. HARRY ANSPACHER.

It happened on a warm day in August, 1895. The flowers were blooming and nothing disturbed the harmony of that summer day, save the chirping of crickets.

The town, or rather city, of Craigsmore, nestling in among the Chesterfield Hills, of New Hampshire, was at the time the story opens, quite large. It was both city and country. The business or city part stopped quite abruptly, then the country commenced. Far away as the eye could reach were green meadows, with quiet running brooks, in which the gentle cows could be seen standing up to their knees. In some of the fields the hay was stacked up, filling the air with its sweet odor, and this, together with the lowing of the cows, gave indications of a typical country village.

A word must be said of the mountains. They stretched around, almost encircling the little town. Nearly every day brought a change in their color, sometimes blue, sometimes gray, they served as an indication of the weather. Sometimes, may often, they were hid from sight by the lowering clouds, which sprang up so suddenly, and gave those terrific down-pours of rain for which that region was noted. But to one, or rather two, of these mountains to which we must give our attention.

They are detached from the rest of the range, standing side by side, like grim sentinels, guarding the approach to the city from the south. So closely do they stand together that at first sight they seem like one mountain. Ah! how distinctly do I remember visiting that quiet city one summer, glad to get away from the worry and toil of the great metropolis. And then how glad I was to take a long walk to those two mountains which attracted my attention at once, where I found—but that is the purpose of the story.

In a small but prettily built cottage about two miles from the two mountains, which, by the way, were called Upper and Lower South Mountain, dwelt honest John Marlen. For over thirty years he had lived in that humble dwelling and was contented. At first, when he came, Craigsmore was but a straggling village. He had maintained himself and his wife by farming, but as he was growing old, he had been compelled to cease his labors, and the task of supporting the family fell upon his only son, Will. His father had given him an excellent education, and the young man had decided to become a lawyer. When he had passed his bar examination, he rented a small office in New York, and after patient waiting, had a thriving practice.

After a very busy winter in New York, Will had written his parents that he would be home for a vacation and spend about three weeks with them. So, in the latter part of August, he left the city.

As the train drew up at Craigsmore Station, there was John waiting for Will with the rig. The old man had come to the station an hour before so as to make sure not to miss the train. My! how his eye lighted up as he saw his "baby" descend from the train, satchel in hand. After a hearty greeting, Will jumped into the wagon and they drove off.

That night as they were, all sitting on the front porch Will said: "Father, I believe I'll take a walk over to South Mountain tomorrow. Do you remember how I used to love that place? There isn't any hook or cave or den that I don't know."

"Wal," said old John, "ye be old enough to take keer o' yourself, but I heerd yesterday forenoon that sev'ral young fellers went over t'ar fer a couple o' days' campin'. They be gone nigh on three weeks, and nary a word has anyone o' us heerd tell on 'em. Their folk begun ter git mighty skeery and begun ter carry on so that a couple o' the fellers sez, 'Let's git up a sarchin' party.' Sure 'nough they do, but it haint done one bit o' good. The party came back yesterday. They said they came across their camp, but the boys were clean gone. A trunk with their spare clothin', and all their cookin' material, pots, pans, and the like, were there. Thet proves that they haint gone campin' elsewhere. They jist disappeared. The party hunted all over fer them, but all was in vain. Thar's some-

thin' mighty mysterious about it. Nary a soul will go near the mountain. They reckon it's haunted."

After this somewhat lengthy speech, the old man cleared his throat and settled back in his chair.

Will was silent for a few moments. Then he said, "Father, that theory about the mountain being haunted is all bosh. I suppose the young fellows got tired and moved. There are lots of little caves where they can camp, and where no one can find them."

"Mebbe, mebbe, Will," said his father, with the air of a man who has made up his mind, and whose opinion cannot be shaken, "but it looks mighty queer fer all thet. Why should they go off an' leave all their things thar?"

"Of course, I cannot say why they did that," said Will, a little petulantly. "I suppose they didn't want to be encumbered with any extra baggage."

"Wal, I shouldn't like fer you to go," said the old man, driven to his last stronghold.

"Very well," was the reply, and there the subject was dropped. It was not referred to by either father or son for several days. One morning Will said, "Has anything been heard of those fellows, father?"

"Not a word."

"Well, I think I'll run up the mountain to-morrow," said Will.

"In course, Will, ye kin go if you've really set yer mind ter it, 'cause I wouldn't interfere with yer amusement fer the world. Ye come up here to enjoy yerself, so go ahead."

"I don't think I shall stay more than two days this time; I trust my cave where I kept all my cooking utensils has not been molested."

"I guess it hain't, 'cause it's a sticky place ter find. Ye took me thar once, but I'll be darned if I would be able ter find th' place again."

Will lingered only long enough to pack up a little spare clothing, get his gun and a brace of revolvers, and then was off.

It would be well to follow and give an account of those three young men who had created such a furor in the little town of Craigsmore.

They were Ed. Relsome, Howard Kepler and Tom Moore. They lived close together in the lower part of the town, where it was the habit of thieves and vagabonds to gather. Though born of respectable parents, they had gradually drifted into a life of crime, and now behold them, at the age of twenty-one, full-fledged burglars and marauders, and recognized by many a law-breaker as his superiors.

There had been a conference among the worthy trio the night before they went to South Mountain, behind closed doors and shutters. By the stealthy manner in which each crept to the rendezvous, one would imagine that some underhand business was occupying their minds.

"Pals," said Ed. Relsome, when they were together, "while I was walking along Stone Street yesterday morning, I noticed a large and handsome residence situated on the left-hand side of the street. Seeing a passer-by approaching, I asked him, with the manner of a stranger seeking information, whelived there. He told me that a rich fellow by the name of Fenton occupied the house. You know, pals, that our trade gives us sharp eyes, and enables us to see many things at a glance. Well, after what I had heard, I took one glance at the outside of the building and took in all its points, both weak and strong. The first thing that caught my eye was a cellar window, which, on closer observation, I saw to be without protecting bars, or anything of the kind. These little windows just large enough to admit a man, run all around the house. Now, my plan is this: That the three of us should, on some dark night, be walking over past the house—accidentally, of course—"

"Rather accidentally, on purpose," observed Kepler, dryly.

"Yes," answered Relsome, "but to continue. One can stand guard on the outside, while the other two enter by one of the cellar windows. We can then go through the house very easily. Last night I returned to the spot and by watching the lights in the different rooms, I discovered where the stairways are, and have, all in all, a pretty fair

idea of the interior of the house."

"By George!" exclaimed Tom Moore, when Relsome had finished. "By George! that seems too good to be true. But do you know if there is anything worth while in the house?"

"Yes," answered Relsome. "There is a new electric plant, which is building near Fenton's house, and of which Fenton has the building contract. Day before yesterday he received an immense sum in the house, which is to be used as pay for the workmen. Now, don't you think that money will look better in our pockets than in their's?"

"Well I should guess," exclaimed the rest in a breath.

"But another thing. How about the occupants?" suggested Moore.

"Don't let that worry you," answered Relsome. "There are the old man and his wife, one son about eighteen years old, and one grown-up daughter, also three female servants who inhabit the garret, and are therefore out of our way."

"Well, count me in," said Kepler.

"Here too," chimed in Moore.

"That's the way I like to hear you talk," exclaimed Relsome, taking each by the hand. "With three inseparables like Kepler, Moore and myself, nothing can fail. But there is one thing more I want to say: Let the three of us go over to South Mountain and camp for about a week. Then from there we can get to the house and attend to that affair of ours, and get back to the mountain again, so that if people do connect us with the robbery, which I don't believe they will, we can show that we were away from home at the time. Let's go over to the mountain tomorrow. What do you think of it?"

The other two agreed to the plan and the meeting broke up.

Will Marlen had passed his first night on the mountain admirably. It seemed so natural for him to curl up in his cave and fall asleep, just as he had done years ago. So we find him up bright and early, looking for game for breakfast.

While on the hunt, he stopped every now and then to gaze at the little village of Craigsmore stretching along far below him. The early mountain air was very clear, and by the aid of his field glass, he could even pick out his father's little house, nestling in among the clustered dwellings. While looking for familiar landmarks in the village, his eye rested on the market square, and there he saw an unusual sight—

Crowds of excited men were walking up and down hurriedly, or brandishing weapons, while all were gestulating violently. Suddenly the sound of an alarm bell came faintly to his ears. Then he knew that something out of the way was the matter. So, forgetting all about the breakfast which he had not yet eaten, he started at breakneck speed down the side of the mountain. At the foot he was fortunate enough to find a farmer's wagon going towards the town, a circumstance of which he took advantage. They were going along at a pretty good rate, and were just about to enter the town, when they were greeted with the cry, "Halt! and come down off that wagon!" Both were surprised and somewhat taken aback when they saw themselves confronted by an armed man. Will was very much relieved to find him an acquaintance, and jumped off the rig.

"Why, Tom, what is this for?"

"Hello, Marlen; is that you? Didn't you hear the news?"

"No; I was over the mountain last night. What happened?"

"Tell me, who is that old guy that came with you?" asked the armed man, without heeding the question.

"Oh, he's some farmer from Lebanon. But what happened?" asked Will impatiently.

"Can't tell you while I'm on duty, because I'll have to take your companion to the lock-up as a suspicious character. It's a lucky thing for you that I know you, or you'd have the pleasure of accompanying me."

Will, whose curiosity had been worked up to the highest pitch, started on a run for his father's house. The old man was just coming out when Will came through the door like a tornado. The result was that Marlen senior was struck with an irrepressible desire to make the acquaintance of the floor. No bones were broken, however, and after Mrs. Marlen had gone off into a series of fainting fits, tranquility descended upon the household.

"Why, dad, what happened here last night?" asked cause of all the mischief, as soon as he had recovered his breath. "Wal, you see, this is what happened." But instead of listening to the old man with his rustic English, we will tell the story in our own words.

(Continued in next Sunday's issue.)

The man who has so little knowledge of human nature as to seek happiness by changing anything but his own disposition will waste his life in fruitless efforts and multiply the griefs which he proposes to remove.

Each day has its mercy and should render praise. Fresh are the dews of each morning, and equally fresh are its blessings.

If you want to make friends, interest yourselves in the affairs of others; do not try to interest them in yours.

WALDORF BABY

STOLEN FROM ITS MOTHER, IS STILL MISSING.



The Waldorf-Astoria, New York's most exclusive hotel, has a kidnapping mystery. Mrs. Jennie Hodge, wife of the assistant traffic manager of the Standard Oil Co., was robbed of her little five-year-old daughter Gilda while taking tea in the Waldorf tea room. She suspects Richard Maxwell, her former husband, of the deed. The child is still missing.

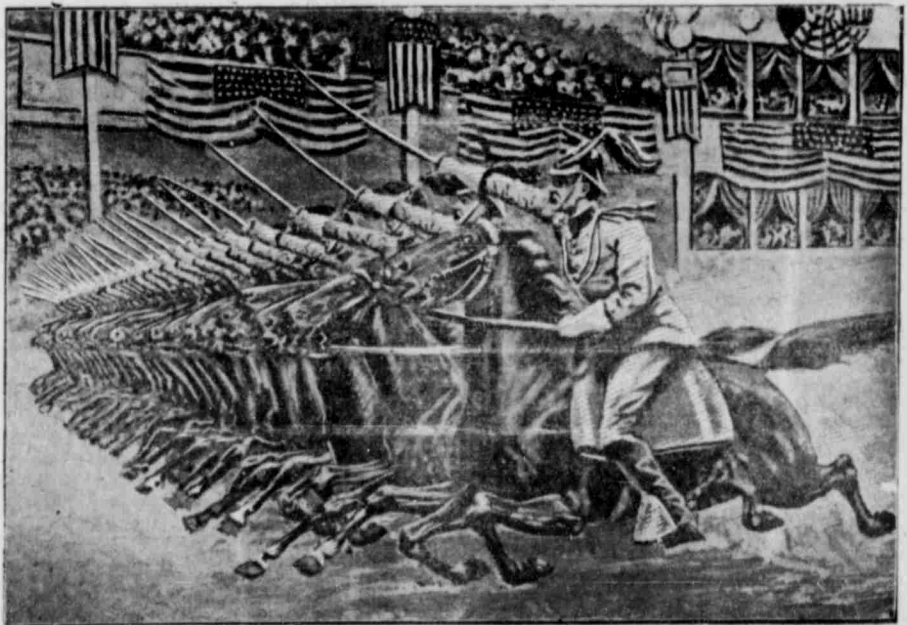
A SUNDAY THOUGHT.

"Our lives are just what we make them." How often do we hear that expression? Yet how much attention do we give it? It is, however, very true. Just what we give the world just that do we receive. Look for sunshine and happiness—aim to scatter it with a free hand and it is yours. Give every one a pleasant smile, a kind word and the same will be given you. However look at the world through blue goggles and everything is blue, dark and dreary. Man, though can't, or won't, learn that as he "sows so shall he reap;" that this world is one great, big mirror and simply shows us our own reflections and that to be happy and make others happy he must be the personification of good nature. Many a man has started to his work in the morning feeling at outs with everything and everybody—all downcast, but on the way has had it all dissipated by a bright, cheery smile and a merry "good morning" from some friend. He should take the smile and pass it on, appreciating how it "boosted" him up, but somehow he never realizes this. To be happy you must radiate happiness. Try it.

There'll be a family spat
If they don't get The Chat.

HOW THE BOYS IN BLUE RIDE AND FIGHT FOR UNCLE SAM

Dashing Charge of Cavalry at the National Tournaments Which are Held at Madison Square Garden, New York, Every Year.



The Military Tournament annually held at Madison Square Garden, New York, attracts the attention of military men, regular and militia, in all parts of the country. There are exhibited the latest improvements in equipment, drill and arms, and each year the cavalry, especially of the regular army, wins fresh admiration for their daring and skilful horsemanship and their dashing soldierly bearing.